

I am writing today to express my extreme dismay at Sinclair Broadcasting's highly publicized decision to force their local stations to air an anti-Kerry "documentary" under the guise of its being "news" immediately prior to the presidential election. Airing such an extreme anti-Kerry documentary only days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation as well as inappropriate use of public airwaves. The danger in this case is in Sinclair's clear motive to inappropriately influence the outcome of this closely contested election by the timing and content of this broadcast piece. I would like to remind you that the FCC is the guardian of the PUBLIC airways, which TV stations are privileged to use, and which they are not entitled to use, especially for propaganda purposes.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for corporation's bottom line and their friends' interests, and less - if anything at all - of what serves the best interests of our cherished but endangered democracy. Instead of propaganda produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter at the grassroots where the rubber hits the road.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. Their actions illustrate why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. I urge you to vigorously and immediately investigate the actions of Sinclair and to take appropriate punitive action. I want them blocked from airing this propaganda. If Janet Jackson bearing her bosom is worthy of an uproar at the FCC and Congress and imposition of fines, surely Sinclair's actions merit more than a slap on the wrist! After all, what could be more pornographic than willful distortion of our political process. I would like to see Sinclair's FCC license immediately yanked by the FCC, though I will admit with a Republican-controlled government and agencies, it is highly unlikely, though clearly the FCC should take immediate action.